



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER

1700 N. Congress Ave. • Austin, TX 78701-1495 • 512-463-5339 • FAX: 512-475-1415

PRESS RELEASE

**Commissioner Bush announces GLO efforts to
remove dangerous derelict structures along the Texas
coast**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 21, 2016

Contact: Brittany Eck
(512) 463-5708
brittany.eck@glo.texas.gov

Today Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush announced a groundbreaking effort by the Texas General Land Office (GLO) to secure funds necessary to remove dangerous derelict structures along the Texas coast. Commissioner Bush announced that the GLO submitted an application for grant funding under the Direct Component of the federal RESTORE Act seeking \$6.9 million dollars for structure removal. As part of Commissioner Bush's commitment to comprehensive coastal protection, the GLO will match the RESTORE funding with its own commitment of \$4.4 million for this project.

"Efforts to remove these structures now will help ensure that Texas taxpayers will not pay more later," said Commissioner Bush. "These structures, if left untreated, may endanger the bays, wetlands and estuaries that are critical to the environment and economy of the Texas Coast. These obstructions pose a navigational hazard for commercial boats, recreational fishing, and other maritime activities. Through strategic use of these RESTORE funds, Texas will be able to rid the coast of these dangerous structures, restore wetlands that slow storm surge and protect our coast from potential hazards."

In 2014 the GLO contracted with HNTB to provide aerial photography of any obstruction in state waters, including all bays and the length of the coast, and conduct an assessment. Over the last 16 months, GLO Coastal Field Operations, Oil Spill Prevention and Response, and Construction Services began an active inventory of structures in the bays and the Gulf, conducting onsite inspections of more than 1,000 known structures and identifying an additional 357. Of the structures assessed, GLO staff identified more than 200 that should be removed.

These derelict structures include wells, platforms, debris, docks and pilings. Abandoned structures pose a hazard for recreational and commercial boaters, surfers, and others navigating along the Texas coastline and in bays or estuarial areas. If not plugged properly derelict wells and platforms pose a risk of oil spill or other chemical contamination as well as the potential for explosion should pressure build in an improperly plugged well. Some structures have become partially buried in the sand and

could be hazardous to vehicles driving across the beach. Once structures degrade it is often more costly to remove them. The GLO has started the process of removing the structures and is seeking the funding necessary to complete this phase of the project. Grant funding through the RESTORE Act with matching funds from the GLO will enable the removal of these dangerous derelict structures to occur quicker, removing potential hazards and saving additional costs down the line.

###